The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, economic, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

WHOLE NO. 1725 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 2, 1944 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 34, NO. 18

FACING the FACTS
With PHILIP PEARL

Philadelphia.—Arriving here a couple of days before the Spring meeting of the AFL Executive Council, we decided to take a look at the current conference of the International Labor Organization, where representatives of some forty-one nations are trying to work out codes for the economic and social betterment of the common people of all the world in the post-war period.

So, the next morning we got up bright and early and rode out to Temple University where the sessions are being held.

One would have supposed that, meeting here in the City of Brotherly Love and inspired by the highly idealistic nature of their endeavors, the delegates to the ILO would constitute one happy family.

We were quickly disabused of such notions. Newspapermen, delegates and hangers-on of all sorts were talking only of disputes and disagreements and disaffections. Friction of all kinds has developed. But perhaps the sharpest controversy has been precipitated by the attempt of the Mexican labor leader, Toledano, to impose the Communist Party line upon the ILO.

Soviet Russia is not represented at this conference, having boycotted the ILO as a "bankrupt" organization, but Toledano and his group of adherents haven't let that stop them from playing the Communist game here for all they are worth.

Oasis In The Jungle

The surest way for the ILO to defeat its own ends is by biting off more than it can chew and digest. That is the Communists strategy and it appears so alluring that a number of delegates have been hoodwinked by it.

Basicly and historically, the ILO operates primarily in the economic field. But an attempt is being made here to divert its operations into political and social areas where it has no direct jurisdiction and cannot function effectively.

From some of the broad proposals submitted here, an outsider would gain the impression that the ILO is trying to substitute itself for the peace conference that will take place when the war ends. Indeed, these proposals attempt to do all the work of the peace conference in advance and to make the decisions upon which even the heads of the United Nations have thus far refrained from passing final judgment.

In this wild jungle of scattered ideas, many of them highly praiseworthy, others highly chimerical, the clear, concise opening statement of Robert J. Watt, American workers' delegate, stands out like a civilized oasis of common sense. To quote but three paragraphs:

"I believe the ILO has grown in the respect of nations because it has concentrated on its own job and has not overreached itself.

"It is our job, our specific job, to remove the causes of economic injustice. It is up to us to remove the inequality of opportunities. It is up to us to help create opportunity for men to live and work as self-respecting individuals. But we cannot create these opportunities by resolutions here in this conference.

It Will All Work Out

"We must concentrate our efforts in enlisting and guiding others to do this work, within every nation, within every community and within every industry."

Much interest, therefore, is evidenced in what the ILO is going to decide about its future role in these international affairs. Indeed, this has become the dominating issue of the conference.

Another hot situation is developing out of the attempts of the Toledano faction to oust the British delegate, Argentina because that country has a fascist government. This move is opposed by the labor movements of this country, Great Britain, Australia and South Africa—representing the great majority of organized workers in the world—because other countries represented here, especially South American nations, are not entirely free of the fascist taint and to exclude one while admitting others would be neither just nor sensible.

Strangely enough, the chief cause of disagreement are not noticeable in the plenary sessions of the conference which are formal in character and slowed up by the necessity of translating each report and each motion into three different languages. The committee sessions and the lobby gossip are given over to a great deal of pulling and hauling and the rumor factory operates full blast day and night.

Maybe we are overly optimistic, but we feel that most of the controversies will be ironed out before the conference ends and a sincere, practical and progressive program for the advancement of world-wide economic and social democracy will be successfully formulated by the ILO.

Senate Group Urges $50 Pay Standard For 20 Million White Collar Workers

Demands Scrapping of "Little Steel" Formula For Low-Income Families Hit By Inflation

Washington, D. C.—A special Senate Investigating Committee urgently recommended that the "Little Steel" formula be scrapped with regard to twenty million white collar and low-income workers who have been overtaken by inflation while suffering serious privation.

Declaring that the "plight of these twenty million Americans is the weakest link" in the nation's economic chain, the Committee added:

"Without prompt measures to provide them a way out of their predicament the war effort will be weakened and the future of our nation placed in jeopardy."

Fully sustaining the contentions of the representatives of AFL white collar and public service workers among whom testified at its public hearings several months ago, the Wartime Health and Education Sub-committee of the Senate Labor Committee submitted as its chief recommendation:

"That the Federal War Labor Board cease applying the Little Steel wage formula to substandard wages and that a sound, simple and expeditious procedure for raising such wages be established forthwith."

The Procedure recommended by the Senate Committee follows:

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governments increase salaries of low-paid workers, especially salaries of teachers.

3—If local governments fail to make salary adjustments to meet higher living costs, the Federal Government should provide relief through higher income tax exemptions for such workers.

4—That Social Security and public assistance benefits be increased and extended in scope, "in accordance with the recommendations made by the Social Security Board."

5—That the Bureau of Labor Statistics be given funds to prepare a "cost-of-living index which will accurately reflect changing living standards."

One of the most significant findings of the Senate Committee was that at present price levels an income of even $50 a week provides a "very narrow margin of living."

Nevertheless, the committee's investigation disclosed that many million American families received an income far below this subsistence standard. Its report said that 4,500,000 white collar workers last year averaged $28.69 a week; 3,500,000 retail trade workers averaged $23.83 a week; 1,000,000 service employees, $28.45; 2,000,000 non-school local government employees, $28.35. Many employees averaged $32 a week, but the report said at least 5 per cent of the nation's teachers are paid less than $600 a year.

McNutt Forms Plans To Find Jobs For Those Displaced By Cutbacks

Washington, D. C.—Faced with the probability that unemployment situation will undergo a change in plans for production of war munitions result in labor layoffs, the War Manpower Commission is calling in its labor representatives steps that should be taken to effect an orderly shift of workers to new jobs.

The plan is based on an agreement with the Army and Navy and other procurement agencies that the War Manpower Commission will be kept advised as to when contract adjustments are to be made and the number of workers to be affected.

This information is to be sent to the field representatives who are under instructions to consult with local union and labor management in finding new jobs for displaced workers.

Paul V. McNutt, WMC chairman, said the tie-up will enable such procedures for handling unemployment resulting from cutbacks as not based on fear that the country will be faced with a big unemployment problem. Instead, he said, it should be regarded as a move to guarantee the most effective use of displaced manpower.

It is believed that plans have been developed that have been of great concern locally, there still prevails a general over-all shortage which means that will make possible the quick absorption of all displaced workers who are willing to go to new jobs unless the number grows far greater than is now anticipated.

So far, the major adjustments have been in ammunition plants, although changes also have taken place in a few other industries, including aircraft and industrial chemicals.

The only communities where the volume of layoffs running from cutbacks is large enough to be of concern to the commission are St. Louis and the twin cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul.

In St. Louis, adjustments in five major plants resulted in a decline of 57,334 in employment between November, 1943, and March, 1944. Approximately 20 per cent of the affected workers were employed in an aircraft plant. The others were working in ammunition factories.

In Minneapolis and St. Paul production adjustments in ammunition plants resulted in the laying off of 14,900 workers between August and March. More than half of these were women. Additional needs of some of the large firms in the area, together with replacements, have absorbed a large number of the unemployed.

In both of these areas, Mr. McNutt explained, the problem of getting the men into new jobs was already ready. He said that they had, in fact, proved to be a pool of labor to which other industries turned primarily for additional workers.

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It will be recalled that the last vote of Typographical Union on the question of AFL reaffiliation, November 30, 1943, missed by only 1225 votes out of a membership of 90,000.

Those advocating reaffiliation point out that the main reason responsible for failure to put the issue across last year was the lack of sufficient time between the AFL convention and the date of voting, to acquaint the membership with action of the AFL meeting at Boston, which unanimously approved a joint agreement reached by representatives of the ITU and AFL at Miami, guaranteeing autonomy of the printers' international, and agreeing to cancel all past indebtedness of that union.

Lewis M. Herrmann, of Newark Typographical Union No. 103, chairman of the sponsoring committee, and Tillman K. Garrison, of Seattle Typographical Union No. 202, vice-chairman, in a joint appeal to 864 locals of the ITU for a favorable vote on AFL reaffiliation, call attention to the fact that every member of the executive council of the organization, as well as all candidates for international office at the biennial election May 17 are unanimously in favor of the return of the printers to the ranks of labor."

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To make the proposal binding under the laws of the union, the Executive Council voted to have it submitted to the next convention of the I. B. E. W. for ratification.

This makes the third large international union affiliated with the AFL to act within recent weeks to drop initiation fees for ex-service men. The others were the International Association of Machinists and the International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

AFL President Green has urged all affiliated unions to take such action and to facilitate in every way possible the re-employment of servicemen when the fighting ends.

New Smith Bill Seeks To Subsidize Profiteers And Sweatshop Bosses

Washington, D. C.—Showing where his loyalties are affixed, labor-baiting Rep. Howard Smith (Dem., Va.) has introduced a bill in Congress which would permit employers and profiteers to deliberately wreck the price control program, to escape from union contracts and to push the cost of living skyward.

Never in the history of Congress has such a veritable magna charta for sweatshoppers and price-gougers been proposed. Even confirmed anti-labor members of Congress are expected to oppose the new brain-child of Rep. Smith because it would obviously upset the nation's entire war program.

The bill proposes to establish seven starvation wages by forbidding the War Labor Board to make upward adjustments of clearly substandard pay scales.

It would also prevent the War Labor Board from requiring any employer to sign a contract to which he had not agreed, thus permitting employers to engage in a large-scale program of wrecking unions during the war emergency such labor has voluntarily given up the strike weapon.

OPA Administrator Chester Bowles issued the following blistering comment on the Smith Bill:

"It would freeze wages but not stabilize prices at all; guarantees profits in the guise of setting prices; make the black market operator and the war profiteer rejoice; encourage rather than discourage chiseling, especially by large scale violators; and deny the victims of chiseling his opportunity to gain redress from the courts."

The bill would wreck one of OPA's most powerful enforcement weapons—the collection of triple damages from violators of price regulations. It would also prevent OPA from cutting off supplies of rationed commodities from persons who are violating regulations.

Every business man in America would be guaranteed profits by a provision compelling OPA to fix price ceilings for any firm that could show it was not operating at a profit. Another provision would require boosting price ceilings whenever costs increase, regardless of how much profit business may make.

Rent control would be ruined by provisions guaranteeing a profit to every landlord and forcing OPA to raise rents which are not 5 per cent above 1940 levels. Another section would compel local administrators to raise rents whenever landlords can show increased taxes or operating costs.

A flagrant piece of class legislation, the bill would remove Western Union from the jurisdiction of the War Labor Board, thus permitting that company to perpetuate low wages. It would also prohibit the War Labor Board from ordering payment of back wages for more than three months.

Plasma Saved Life of AFL Soldier, Now Recovering In Army Hospital

Washington, D. C.—A medical miracle is taking place in the shattered frame of Staff Sgt. Arthur E. Arno, an infantryman from Astoria, L. I., but it couldn't have happened if it hadn't been for blood plasma from home.

Blood donated through labor union canning centers a large part of the use of the plasma which has been sent overseas, by the American Red Cross. White, before he joined the Army, was a member of the Building Service Employees' Union, AFL, Local 32B, of New York City.

In Walter Reed General Hospital, here, from a spine wound suffered more than seven months ago in Sicily, White is paralyzed from the waist down.

The other day he moved his left leg about an inch. It was made possible by a delicate operation, but, as White points out he wouldn't have been there for the operation if it had not been for the blood donors back in the United States.

The blood plasma, modern drugs and new surgical procedures are credited with gradually restoring life to White's paralyzed limbs.

White, who holds the Silver Star for single-handed attacks in which he destroyed two German machine gun nests in Sicily last July, was wounded Aug. 2 by a bullet from the rifle of a Nazi sniper which smashed his spine and severed his spinal cord.

The bullet entered through his chest and left behind a gaping wound which medical authorities say would have meant almost certain death in the first World War. He was grievously wounded at El Guettar in the North African campaign.

Given first aid immediately by medical corpsmen, White lay five hours in heavily shelled area before it was possible to move him to the rear. At the field hospital, surgeons sewed White's severed spinal cord together. Last week, seven nerves in his back were spliced and he is gradually gaining control of his lower limbs.

White's story emphasizes the importance of the campaigns by labor unions for blood donations from their members, and the need for the continuation of such drives.

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AFL Council Rallies Labor To Back Invasion To Limit

A Plea For Industrial Democracy

Philadelphia.—Following are excerpts from the address delivered before the conference of the International Labor Organization in session here by Robert J. Watt, international representative of the American Federation of Labor and American workers' delegate to the ILO:

We meet here to shape the mechanism of economic internationalism for the advancement of men and women in your home town and mine. Can we learn from the errors of the past so that we can accomplish our objective? I am not overly optimistic, but I am hopeful. The cost of failure will be great. We cannot afford to fail this time. Mankind must master the tools of modern industrialism and commercial life. Unless we do, political patterns for peace are useless and futile.

Ours is the duty to help ordinary people to earn a better living by helping nations to expand their standards of business.

Ours is the duty to make competition an incentive towards better living and not a barrier in the faces of the masses of workers. Ours is the duty to prove that cooperation among nations and employers and workers is healthier than the law of the jungle. Ours is the duty to safeguard the rights of the many and the few, to develop capacity and resources so that all may benefit from more of the better things of life.

Ours is the duty of finding the way to keep industry and labor and agriculture in balance while we seek bigger and better achievements for each for the greater welfare of all. Ours is the duty of enabling people everywhere to work in peace to provide plenty for all.

Ours is the duty of teaching nations and individuals that poverty is a plague against which none can be quarantined by isolation, but against which all can be protected by common effort.

Once this war is over, the nations of the world must rebuild their economic systems. The old workshops have largely gone, under the burst of explosives or through the demand for explosives. Europe is littered with the rubble of factories and farms, while the United States is glutted with arsenals which must some day be dismantled or converted.

Millions of men have been killed or maimed in battle while scores of millions have been rendered homeless. The destruction of property values would be gloomy indeed except that the very achievements of destruction testify to the sacredness with which the free nations hold to the right of individual liberty. They could not have gave purchased peace with slavery, but they knew that they could not afford that price nor endure the consequences. They chose instead to imperil life and possessions to defend freedom and win it.

If we could and did stake so much to hold peace and freedom from international gangsters, can we not be equally ready to invest as much to protect and cement it? The fruits of the peace and freedom we are preserving in the ordeal of battle?

I say we can. I say we must. I say it is our job here to dramatize to the world that what we are worth risking life and possessions to defend from an armed foe is worth all possible effort to protect from ignorance and indifference.

As the United States Workers' delegate and one of your elected members of the Workers' group on the Governing Body, I am confident that the union labor movement of the United States will continue to work with the ILO owe so much, will continue to inspire the responsible leaders and members of trade unions represented at this conference.

But not upon me does the profound responsibility for the fulfilment of our responsibilities. We are here as delegates to serve those whom we represent in our organizations and in the Governments of the International Labor Conference. The world of tomorrow will be the judge of our stewardship. It will not be the applause of today. The decisions we make today and the collaboration we demonstrate will determine how well we here have represented those whom we serve.

Workers of the United States seek to foist no ideology on other lands. We only seek to help to attain a just and enduring peace through the removal of inequalities and injustices, through the removal of hunger and desperation which breed unrest.

We propose economic democracy to this great International Labor Conference as the road to social justice because we believe that only through enlightened self-government can man attain justice—political, economic or social.

Workers In Nazi-Occupied Europe Will Aid Invasion, Green Predicts

New York City.—AFL President William Green delivered a significant pre-invasion statement in an address at ceremonies attending the installation of Luigi Antonini and other officers of Dressmakers Union, Local No. 89, of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union here. He said:

"America is now ready to undertake the greatest military drive in the history of the world. Our armies are strong, our war supplies are at peak strength and our labor force is turning out new armament in record-breaking quantities.

"The months ahead will test our courage and our patience and our resolution. Labor realizes that great losses may be sustained by the attacking forces and that many of the finest sons and daughters of many American workers whose sons are serving on the fighting fronts.

"That realization inspires us to render greater service than ever before so that we may make the sacrifices unnecessary toward winning the war in the shortest possible time and toward saving lives of our loved ones.

"One circumstance which, in my opinion, will give great assistance to the invading forces of the United Nations is the fact that Hitler cannot rely upon such whole-hearted support from the workingmen and women of Germany that the occupied countries.

"Despite the suffering and slavery that he has inflicted upon the people of France, Belgium and Holland, Hitler has never succeeded in crushing their love of freedom and their hopes of turning the tables on their oppressors.

"Once our armies of liberation march into the occupied territories, the workers of these countries, despite any fear of cruel retribution, will rally to our support and extend valuable assistance to us.

"I believe we can count on such developments because of the events which took place when the forces of the United States and Great Britain invaded Italy.

"It is now an established fact that this invasion was made possible in large measure by the workers in Italy who, by their sabotage and strikes, have since done everything in their power to harass the Nazis and help the United Nations.

"The workers of France, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia and other occupied countries know what happened in Italy and they are ready to do the same at the proper moment.

"They yearn for the day of liberation and they realize that their only hope for salvation lies in the defeat of the Nazis.

"As an evidence of our good intentions and sincere desire to help them, I urge the workers of Nazi-occupied Europe to witness the benefits which we have *freely* given to the people of Italy.

"We did not enslave the Italian people as Hitler did. On the contrary, we freed them, we fed them and their starving children, we gave them every opportunity to earn a good living, we helped them to reestablish their free trade union movement and we will permit them to establish a new and democratic government of the people as soon as military considerations permit.

"The workers of America are anxious to see the free and democratic trade-union movements of the nations of Europe reconstituted because we know that such organizations of workers are the strongest bulwark and protection of democratic institutions. And we know that democracy must be revived and reinvigorated in Europe in order to assure lasting world peace, as well as social and economic security."

SURVEY SHOWS INCREASE OF 'UNION SECURITY'

Washington, D. C.—The Labor Department revealed that organized labor is now in a stronger position to resist union-wrecking schemes by employers than ever before.

An official survey disclosed that out of 13,750,000 workers in private industry covered by union agreements almost 75 percent are protected by some form of "union security." Thirty percent have the airtight safeguard of a "closed" shop.

STRIKES VANISHING IN WAR INDUSTRY

Washington, D. C.—Latest official figures show that strikes have virtually disappeared from the war production picture. In February time lost due to strikes in all industry dropped to only six one-hundredths of one percent of time worked. That was less than half the time lost previous to 1941.

Since February, not a single major work stoppage by any affiliate of the AFL has marred the war production program.

Union Chiefs Issue New Appeal To Ban All Strikes Until Victory

Philadelphia — Declaring that the impending invasion of Nazi-occupied Europe "is now America's first order of business," the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor opened its Spring session here with a patriotic appeal for all-out participation by labor in the victory drive.

"Above all, we emphasize that this is no time to strike," the Executive Council declared. "When the invasion starts and the fighting hits its highest pitch, the workers of America must carry out their assignments as a sworn and solemn duty with the same spirit and the same high morale as our armed forces. Only in this way can labor do its part fully in bringing about victory in the shortest possible time and in saving the lives of our sons and brothers serving on the fighting fronts."

The Council congratulated the members of the American Federation for their wonderful production record this year which helped to prepare the way "for the final crushing blows against Hitler's domain," it added.

"The record-breaking performance of the nation's soldiers of production has created a weapon of such overwhelming superiority in planes, ships, tanks, guns and ammunition upon which the outcome of the invasion will largely depend."

In its statement, the Executive Council recalled that at its last meeting in January high officials of the government had informed the AFL leaders that the military plans of the United Nations would require vast increases in war production, especially such items as aircraft, radio equipment and landing craft.

Because of these imperative needs, the Executive Council at that time issued a forceful appeal to all affiliated unions urging extraordinary efforts to boost production and abstention from strikes for any cause and under any circumstances.

Reporting on the events which have taken place on the production front in the ensuing three months, the Council said:

"During that period, no strikes have been called by any affiliated union engaged in war production. During that period tremendous progress has been achieved in labor's productivity in key industries. During that period labor has more than fulfilled the government's most optimistic expectations."

Although these results have been most gratifying, the Council warned that labor has not yet completed its work in the war effort, adding:

"We must be prepared for setbacks and heavy losses in military operations of such magnitude as those now under way. Immediate replacement of equipment and munitions will be vitally important.

"The Executive Council therefore cautions the members of the American Federation of Labor against a letdown due to overconfidence. We urge all workers to stick to their war jobs, to strive for new records and to back up to the limit the boys in the armed forces will be risking their lives in direct combat against the enemy."

After making public this statement at a press conference following the Council's opening session, AFL President William Green also announced that the Federation will give energetic support to the forthcoming Fifth War Loan Drive. He revealed that AFL unions will seek to have their war bond purchases earmarked for use in Liberty ship named after Samuel Gompers, founder of the AFL. A ship named after Gompers when it was launched over a year ago was sunk on its maiden voyage,, he reported.

Mr. Green told newspapermen that during the present session the Executive Council will draft recommendations which will be submitted to the forthcoming national conventions of 25 major political parties for inclusion in the party platforms.

He emphasized that special efforts will be made to prevail upon both parties to support legislation to provide funds for immediate enactment of a broad Social Security program. Particularly important, he said, is the adoption of a uniform, federalized unemployment compensation system to tide over displaced workers and returning ex-servicemen until such time as private industry is able to reconvert and provide jobs in peace-time production.

Many of the AFL leaders meeting here are also serving as advisers in the current deliberations of the International Labor Organization's conference on the economic and social codes designed to lift the standards of common people throughout the world after the war ends.

BUSINESSMEN OPPOSE ANTI-LABOR PROPOSAL

San Francisco — An encouraging sign that sanity in employers has become their former anti-union prejudice is provided in the current fight here over a proposed State Constitutional amendment seeking to outlaw "union shop" agreements.

The kibosh was put on the proposal when the California State Chamber of Commerce, the San Francisco Employers' Council and several other local business groups came out in opposition to the measure, charging that it would provoke turmoil and "disrupt war production."